THE HISTORY OF

ROCK

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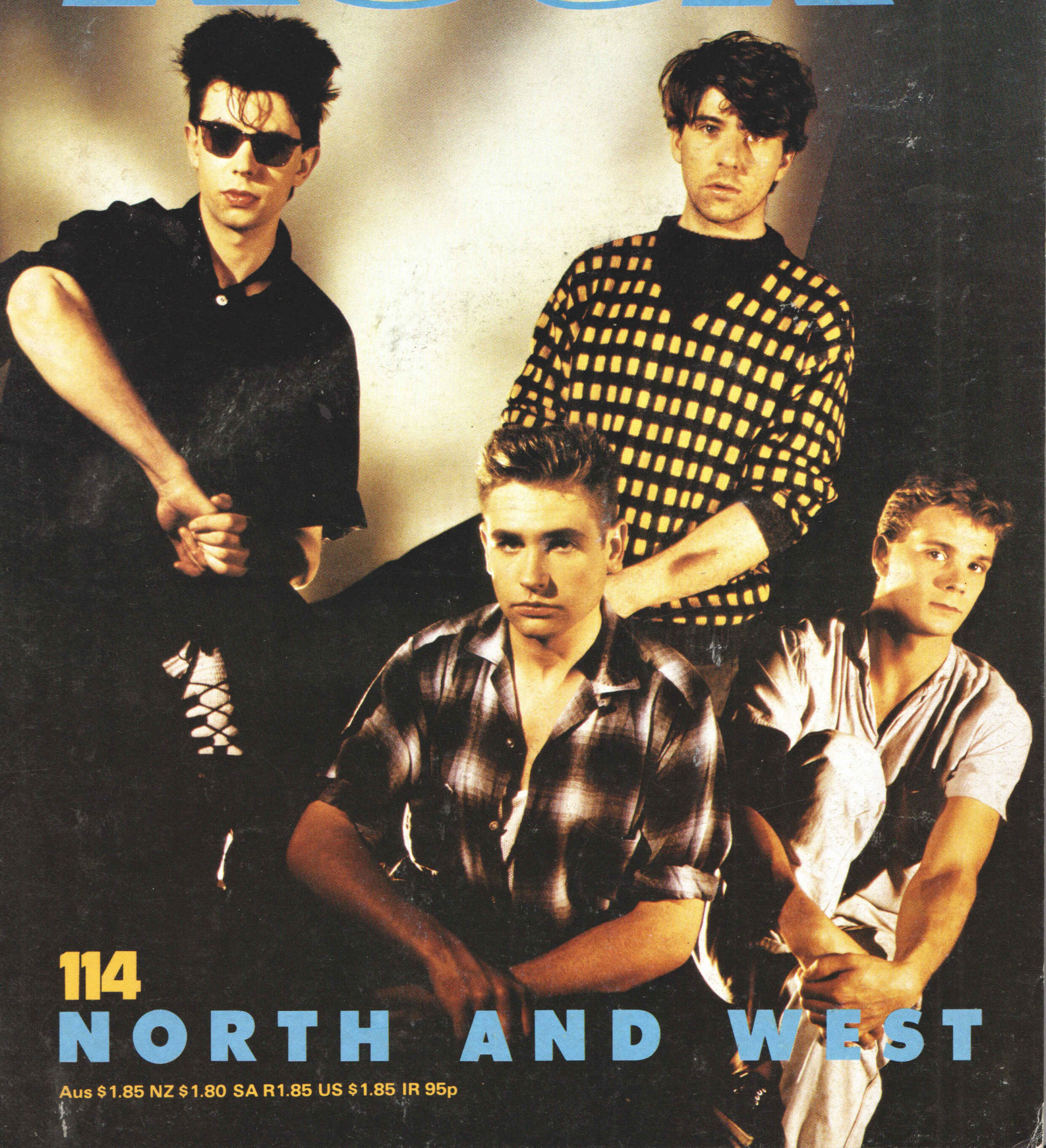

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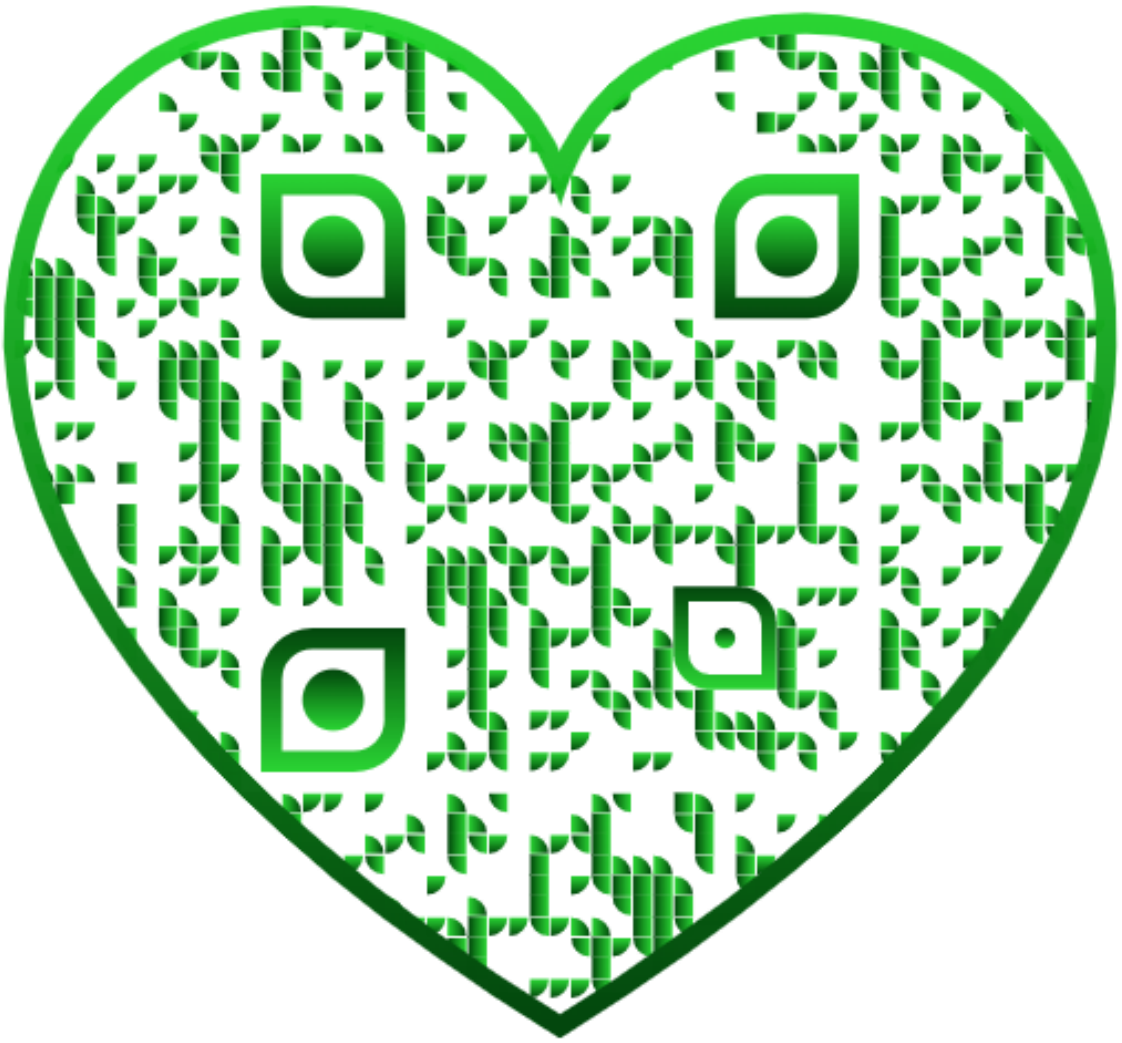
Aus $1.85 NZ $1.80 SA R1.85 US $1.85 IR 95p



THE HISTORY OF ROCK

Published weekly by Orbis Publishing Limited
Orbis House, 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT

Volume 10 Issue 114

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Acknowledgements
Peter Anderson 2267(Tr); **David G. Bailey** 2279(C); **Andre Csillag** 2262(T), 2274(B), Inside back cover; **Rob Doolaard** 2267(B); **Erica Echenberg** 2270(T); **Factory Records** 2269(Inset); **Trevor Key** 2269; **London Features International** Cover, 2261, 2262(B), 2263(T), 2264(B), 2265(Tr), 2286, 2270(B), 2272, 2273, 2274(T), 2275, 2276, 2277, 2279(T, B); **Gary Lornie** 2262(C); **Ilpo musto** Back cover; **Pictorial Press** 2278; **Barry Plummer** 2267(Tl); **Rex Features** 2264(T), 2265(Tl), 2271(R); **Paul Slattery** 2266; **Star File/Robert Bentchick** 2271(Lt), **Star File/Oliver Monroe** 2271(Lb). Photo retouching by **Roy Flooks.** Discographies compiled by **Darren Crook.**

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8384

The History of Rock Price U.K. 75p I.R. 95p Aus. & N.Z. $1.85 S.A. R1.85 U.S.A. $1.85.

How to obtain copies of The History of Rock Copies are obtainable by placing a regular order at your newsagent or by taking out a subscription. **Subscription rates:** For six months (26 issues) £23.00; for one year (52 issues) £46.00. Send your order and remittance to Rock Subscriptions, Punch Subscriptions Services, Watling Street, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Bucks MK2 2BW., being sure to state the number of the first issue required.

Back numbers **U.K. & Eire:** Back Nos. are obtainable from your newsagent or from **History of Rock** Back Nos. Orbis Publishing Ltd., 20/22 Bedfordbury, London WC2N 4BT at cover price. **Australia:** Back Nos. are obtainable from **The History of Rock** Back Nos., Gordon and Gotch (Aus) Ltd, 114 William Street, PO Box 767G, Melbourne, Vic 3001. **New Zealand, South Africa, Europe & Malta:** Back Nos. are available at cover price from your newsagent. In case of difficulty write to the address in your country given for binders. South African readers should add sales tax.

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Hicks from the Sticks

The Sex Pistols' Anarchy Tour sparked off a regional rock revolution

WITH THE BENEFIT of hindsight – and several years of opinionated documentation – it is clear that the arrival of the Sex Pistols' Anarchy Tour at Leeds Polytechnic on 7 December 1976 was the preface to a peculiarly provincial story. Although the Pistols' supposed effects on the established record industry were the subject of media overkill, one aspect of their influence was less widely known; that concert started the process of UK rock's decentralisation away from London.

All the Sex Pistols' previous provincial shows had been cancelled by councils intimidated by the band's growing notoriety in the wake of their Bill Grundy TV interview on 1 December; Leeds thus became the first date of the Anarchy Tour. It was here that the future members of Soft Cell, (Southern) Death Cult, Danse Society *et al* got their first crucial fix on the Pistols' 'anyone can play' principle; here that the jaded anti-establishment at last found fresh and irresistible new heroes in the Pistols and support acts the Clash, the Jam and the Damned; here that future promoters, independent label entrepreneurs and still-amateur rock cognoscenti were first seduced into considering that rock 'n'roll could be their future too.

Jerks and Squares

The Anarchy Tour subsequently hit other northern cities, where its impact appeared to produce further results. It was against this background – and as a direct result of its inspiration – that new northern bands began to form, proliferate and even flourish in the years that followed. In the immediate aftermath of the Pistols' gig, new outfits mushroomed all over Leeds and West Yorkshire. SOS (later to metamorphose into Girls At Our Best), the all-girl four-piece the Straits, the Jerks (briefly with Lightning Records) and the Squares all flourished for some time, although only the last-named of these got even close to breaking through, signing with Sire Records after the company's president, Seymour Stein, heard their debut, self-produced, record on John Peel's Radio One show.

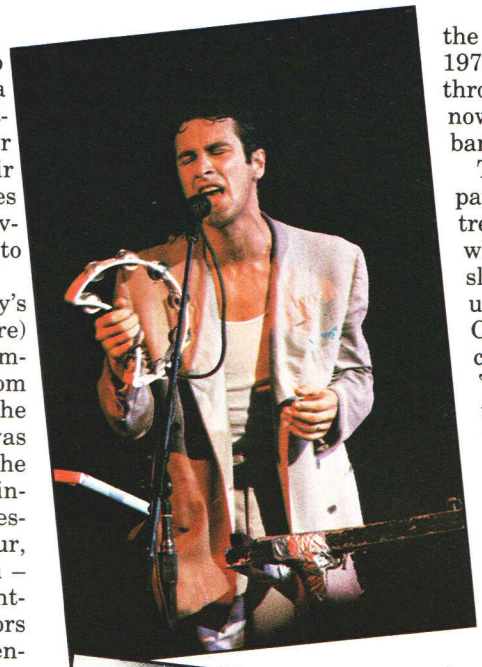
The Gang of Four – first famed in Leeds for an extravagant punk version of Dylan's 'A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall' that they usually included in their set – and the Mekons were the first bands to win more than local attention. In time, there developed a healthy rivalry between these and Cabaret Voltaire and the Human League in nearby Sheffield. In general, however, all the odds were heavily stacked against provincial bands, mostly because the UK record industry and rock media were London-based. As a result, their writers and A&R people were unable either to follow or to understand what was happening in regional centres of activity like Leeds.

A persistent problem, and one that continued into the Eighties, was that the rock press was staffed almost exclusively by London journalists, while the provincials they did hire invariably moved to London and were thus unable adequately to stay in touch with new regional developments. The new freelancers working for the music press who actually remained in the provinces operated as token outposts, never being given the authority personally to 'discover' a new band. Editorial policy-makers in London always decided which new provincial

A Sister Of Mercy shows sympathy for the devil. The Sisters, from Leeds, were just one of the many northern bands to gain hip credibility during the post-punk era of the late Seventies and early Eighties.

outfits were worthy of their patronage, making the occasional trip north – usually to Liverpool – whenever it was agreed that a new band could be given the paper's front-cover endorsement. More often than not, their choices seemed to be random. Critics of their policy could do worse than point to the scores of music press-approved bands 'launched' every year by hopeful record companies, never to be heard of again.

Policing of the provinces by the industry's talent-spotting A&R (Artists and Repertoire) staff was similarly inept. It was virtually impossible for new bands – especially those from unfashionable towns – to get through to the majors, whose inability to monitor what was happening meant that they often signed the wrong bands. All the major post-punk provincial outfits – Echo and the Bunnymen, Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark, Gang of Four, Human League and Soft Cell among them – debuted on independent labels and subsequently switched to majors not because the majors discovered them but because their indie mentors needed help. In many ways, the new provincial independent labels were the A&R departments of the London majors.



The Zoo gang

The first decisive events in the story of provincial post-punk were the formation of two vastly important independent labels: Liverpool's Zoo and Manchester's Factory. Both these were crucial in that they showed the nascent independent scene that it was possible to be influential, tasteful and commercially viable on a shoestring budget. Echo and the Bunnymen's 'Pictures On My Wall' (released on Zoo in 1978) and Orchestral Manoeuvres' superbly packaged 'Electricity' (Factory, 1979) had a particularly big impact, both critically and industrially. Labels like Glasgow's Postcard Records, Norwich's Backs and Sheffield's Pax all took their cue from the early product of Zoo and Factory Records.

Simultaneously influential was Edinburgh's Fast Product, on which the Human League made their debut with 'Electronically Yours' in June 1978, and the Gang of Four unveiled their 'radical dance music' via the *Damaged Goods* EP in October 1978. The no-compromise Gang of Four were perhaps lucky to get this break, there being no significant independent label in Yorkshire – or in the whole of the eastern part of the country for that matter at the time. In any event, the band subsequently consolidated their national audience following a deal with EMI, for whom they recorded the early classic 'At Home He's A Tourist' in 1979.

The peak years of regional activity between 1979 and 1981 answered a lot of questions as punk panned out. Hot on the heels of Echo and the Bunnymen, the Teardrop Explodes and Birkenhead's OMD came the second wave of Liverpool bands: Inevitable Records' Wah! and Nightmares in Wax (who became Dead or Alive), later with WEA and Epic Records respectively, and Modern Eon (briefly with the Virgin off-shoot, DinDisc). Sheffield too 'exploded' with bands like Clock DVA, I'm So Hollow, They Must Be Russians and the Comsat Angels; Leeds meantime blew hot and cold with the Expelaires (who had debuted on Zoo in 1979); Manchester, already oozing 'credibility' through Magazine, Buzzcocks and the Fall, now revealed subtlety via various new Factory bands, notably Durutti Column.

These were key years in other ways too. A particularly important development was the trend towards DIY singles – mostly by bands who could take no more standard rejection slips from the majors. Two Leeds bands that used this route to decisive effect were Soft Cell – soon to star on 1981's *Some Bizarre* compilation – and Girls At Our Best, whose 'Warm Girls' and two follow-ups made them the flavour of many a month. Later, the same city's Sisters of Mercy became past masters of the DIY method, their Merciful Release label enjoying success well into the Eighties.

The simultaneous rise of independent distributors like Pinnacle, Spartan and the Cartel of five provincial independent labels and Rough Trade in London facilitated the DIY approach and continued to democratise the rock scene for small labels. So too did the Alternative Charts, compiled by the Media Research and Information Bureau. A band that appeared in these got noticed by both the industry and the media – and it took ludicrously low sales figures to achieve this. Hull's Red Guitars, for instance, entered the chart in July 1983 having sold 34 copies of their first DIY single 'Good Technology' nationally during the previous week.

As the new decade progressed, however, it was becoming increasingly clear that there were far too many bands – literally thousands of them looking for record deals at any given time – for the music industry to cope with. The huge numbers of bands involved made it impossible for all of them to be auditioned, let alone signed. The situation was such that many promising outfits went to the wall during this period, not because they were not good but because they were not *needed*.

Too much pressure

The industry's various crises (not least its perennial home-taping dilemma) around this time resulted in all the London majors reducing their artist rosters, so that it was becoming even more difficult to get a record deal. Although the resulting frustration drove many a regional-based outfit to call it a day, the more resilient became even more uncompromising – and, because they made no attempt to be commercial, their music benefited in terms of originality.

After many of the major northern towns and cities had yielded promising acts, similar scenes began to develop throughout the country, their success depending to a large extent on attracting the attention of the music press. This trend continued into 1982 when, as a result of the majors' obsession with image and hit singles, the disgusted rock press turned north for protégés with 'integrity': the previously mentioned Southern Death Cult (Bradford), Danse Society (Barnsley) and the Sisters of Mercy (Leeds) were among the newly favoured.

NIGEL BURNHAM

The northlands explode! Jon King of Leeds' Gang of Four (opposite top), Pete Burns of Liverpool's Dead or Alive (opposite below), Bradford's Southern Death Cult (opposite bottom), Sheffield's Comsat Angels (right), and Barnsley's Danse Society (below). Uncompromising and committed new-wave acts such as these proved that England's rock scene of the Eighties did not revolve entirely around the country's capital.

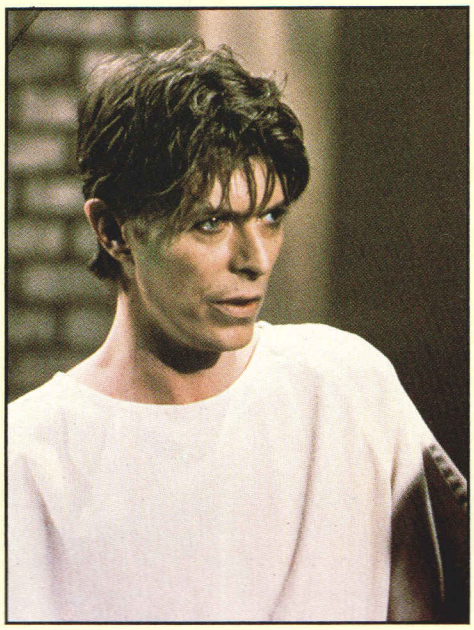
ROCK '80

In 1980, the previous year's great hopes – Blondie, the Police and the Pretenders – were joined in the UK charts by such new acts as Dexys Midnight Runners and Adam and the Ants. Adam Ant also brought a new wave of fashion to the fore, with his swashbuckling dress and sophisticated make-up – a style suggested by punk Svengali Malcolm McLaren and soon adopted by the emerging new romantic groups such as Spandau Ballet, Ultravox and Visage. The latter featured fashion leader Steve Strange.

The previous year's Mod revival, without any strong figurehead, began to lose momentum, although the Jam stayed the pace by proving their diversity and talent. 1980 saw another surge of nostalgia with the revival of rockabilly through the Stray Cats, the Polecats and Matchbox. Heavy metal received fresh wind with such new bands as Def Leppard, Iron Maiden and Saxon, America's Van Halen and Canada's Rush, while former members of Deep Purple prospered as key members of Rainbow, Gillan and Whitesnake. Other veterans like Elton John, Paul McCartney and the Rolling Stones continued to churn out hit albums, while in the US Bruce Springsteen and Tom Petty flourished along with Queen, the Eagles, Billy Joel, Christopher Cross and newcomer Rickie Lee Jones.

The UK singles charts were varied and lively in 1980, with the usual smattering of quirky novelty records. Actor Keith Michell (better known as television's Henry VIII) made the Top Ten in February with the double A-sided 'Captain Beaky'/'Wilfred The Weasel', while a bunch of angelic schoolchildren, St Winifred's School Choir, charmed the hearts of the nation at Christmas with 'No One Quite Like Grandma'. On the alternative scene, the new darlings to emerge from the Northern gloom, Joy Division, were shattered by the suicide of their frontman Ian Curtis, while music fans of all ages the world over were shocked by the tragic killing of John Lennon at the end of the year.

January
7 Hugh Cornwell of the Stranglers is found guilty of possessing heroin, cocaine and cannabis. He is sentenced to eight weeks in jail and fined £300.
16 Paul McCartney is put in a Tokyo prison when eight ounces of marijuana is found in his luggage. The Wings tour of Japan is cancelled, but McCartney is released after 10 days.



Above: David Bowie made his stage acting debut in July playing the title role in 'The Elephant Man'. Below: Bow Wow Wow, featuring teenage singer Annabella Lwin, began their bid for pop success in February.

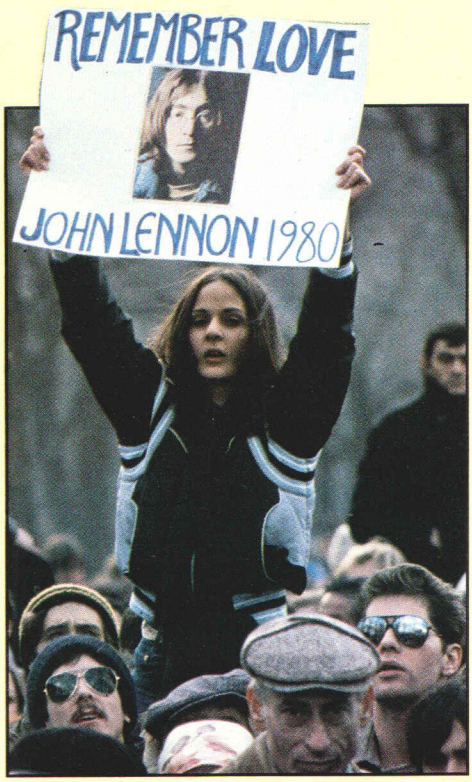
18 The Pretenders' debut LP *Pretenders*, enters the UK charts at Number 1.
26 The Specials' 'Too Much Too Young' gives them their first UK Number 1 single.

February
8 David Bowie is divorced from Angie and wins custody of their son, Zowie.
19 AC/DC singer Bon Scott is found dead in a car in London, having choked on his own vomit after a night of heavy drinking.
22 Malcolm McLaren sacks Adam from the Ants who, fronted by schoolgirl Annabella Lwin, become Bow Wow Wow.

March
3 At Sotheby's, the London auction house, a paper napkin signed by Elvis Presley fetches £500 and a banknote signed by the Beatles goes for £220.
15 The Clash film *Rude Boy* opens at the Prince Charles Theatre, London.
21 The Jam's 'Going Underground' enters the UK singles chart at Number 1.
25 The Police play in Bombay – the first rock band to appear in India since Hawkwind 10 years previously.

April
19 Beggar's Banquet release the first video of any British artist to be available to the public. Selling at £19.99, it covers 45 minutes of a Gary Numan concert at London's Hammersmith Odeon the previous year.
22 Dexys Midnight Runners top the UK singles charts with only their second single, 'Geno'.
26 Blondie's single 'Call Me' is Number 1 on both sides of the Atlantic.

May
1 The first issue of the *Face*, a new monthly rock magazine, is published in Britain.
2 Pink Floyd's single 'Another Brick In The Wall Part Two' is banned by the South African authorities because black schoolchildren had adopted the song as a protest against their second-rate education system.
17 Joy Division's singer Ian Curtis hangs himself shortly after the band complete their second album *Closer*.
21 Joe Strummer of the Clash is arrested by German police for smashing a guitar



Above: A fan mourns the passing of John Lennon, murdered in December. Below: Paul McCartney (second from left), arrested in Tokyo for drug possession in January. Right: St Winifred's School Choir.

over a fan's head at a gig in Hamburg, West Germany.

June
2 Glen Matlock, formerly bass-player with the Sex Pistols, is disqualified from driving for a year after a conviction for drunken driving.
13 Billy Joel's LP *Glass House* tops the US album charts.
21 The Stranglers are accused of starting a riot at Nice University in the South of France. Fans protesting about the poor sound quality smashed windows, damaged furniture and trees.
28 Joy Division's 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' reaches Number 13 in the UK singles charts. Re-released in late 1983, it made the Top Twenty a second time.

July
14 Malcolm Owen, singer with British punk band the Ruts, dies of a heroin overdose.
19 David Bowie makes his stage acting debut in the title role of 'The Elephant Man' in Denver, Colorado.

August
2 Deep Purple top the UK album charts with the *Deepest Purple* compilation four years after the band had split up.
4 Pink Floyd start a week of concerts at London's Earl's Court.
8 The Greater London Council ban the outrageous US act the Plasmatics from exploding a car on stage for their British debut at London's Hammersmith Odeon.
15 George Harrison publishes his autobiography *I, Me, Mine* in a limited, signed edition at £148 a copy.
16 Bass-player Jah Wobble leaves Public Image Ltd, keyboardist Jools Holland leaves Squeeze and drummer Cozy Powell quits Rainbow.
David Bowie has his first UK Number 1 single since the re-issued 'Space Oddity' in 1975 with 'Ashes To Ashes'.
21 The film *Breaking Glass*, featuring singer Hazel O'Connor, opens in London.

September
24 The Son of Stiff Tour gets underway, featuring Tenpole Tudor, Any Trouble and Dirty Looks.
25 Led Zeppelin drummer John Bonham dies at guitarist Jimmy Page's Windsor mansion. After consuming 40 shots of vodka, he choked on his own vomit.

October
4 Stiff Records lose their appeal against a fine of £50 and £50 costs for selling T-shirts bearing the label's motto: 'If it ain't Stiff, it ain't worth a fuck.'
9 John Lennon releases 'Starting Over' on his 40th birthday. Yoko hires a sky-writer to display 'Happy Birthday John' across the New York skies.

November
1 Singer Graham Bonnet leaves Rainbow.
21 Don Henley, Eagles drummer, is arrested after a 16-year-old girl is found naked in his home in Los Angeles suffering from a drugs overdose. He is put on probation for two years, fined £2000 and ordered to attend a drugs counselling scheme for two years.
22 St Winifred's School Choir make Number 1 in the UK with their sentimental single 'No One Quite Like Grandma'.

December
6 Queen have a Top Ten hit in the UK with the single 'Flash' from the movie *Flash Gordon*, released the same year.
8 John Lennon is shot dead outside the Dakota building in New York by 25-year-old Mark Chapman.
20 Motorhead drummer Phil Taylor breaks his neck in Belfast after a show when he accidentally falls on his head while fooling about with friends.
21 The Police play the first of three charity Christmas shows in a large tent on London's Tooting Bec Common.
29 Folk singer Tim Hardin dies in Los Angeles of a drugs overdose.

ANNETTE KENNERLEY

UNKNOWN PLEASURES

Joy Division's journey to a New Order

On 9 May 1983, New Order walked on stage near Birmingham and performed the final exorcism of the memory of their near-legendary previous line-up, Joy Division. To the tears of many, vocalist Bernard sang a stunning 'Love Will Tear Us Apart' and the audience sang with him. It was the first time the band had played any of the repertoire of their previous incarnation. Although they attempted to explain the song as a birthday tribute to their manager (and the date chosen was almost exactly three years after the last Joy Division concert and the subsequent suicide of their lead singer), they did it much more for themselves than for the audience. New Order had achieved a success comparable to that of Joy Division: their single 'Blue Monday' (released only as a 12-inch) had gone to Number 12 three weeks earlier, and their new album *Power, Corruption And Lies* had crested at Number 4 in the UK the day before.

Joy Division were, by far, the most influential post-punk band to emerge in the late Seventies; the groups they influenced – the Cure, U2, the Passage, Echo and the Bunnymen, the Sound, Tears For Fears and most of the bands on Factory Records – carried much of Joy Division's introspective atmosphere well into the Eighties, while New Order developed their music into a much lighter, more rhythmic electronic cascade.

Despite the band's constant revision of their early history, it appears to have begun in 1976 when two Mancunian lads, Bernard Dickin and Peter Hook, finished winterising their scooters and rode off to see the Stranglers. By the time of the Sex Pistols' Anarchy Tour at the end of 1976, Terry Mason and another boy had joined them to form the Stiff Kittens, a garage punk band described by *Sounds* as a 'most grotesque offering'. Soon afterwards, Bernard's friend left, and Ian Curtis, who had been working as a settlement officer for the National Health Service, met the band; his addition was to provide the perfect vocal style and lyrics the band needed.

Over the next five months, the Stiff Kittens laboured to learn their instruments, a problem made more difficult by their inability to find a suitable drummer, Terry Mason having become the band's manager. They changed their name to Warsaw (after a track on Bowie's recently-released *Low* album) in May 1977, and their first public gig took place later that

month at Manchester's Electric Circus – the residency of Northern groups such as the Drones, Slaughter and the Dogs, V2, and the Panik. Almost everyone who saw Warsaw's debut appears to agree about one thing: they were simply dreadful. They had recruited a drummer only the night before, and lacked coherence; their dissonant sounds actually drove part of the audience out of the building. But Paul Morley, a young local correspondent for *New Musical Express*, saw something no one else would admit – a spark of greatness in their 'twinkling evil charm'.

Too much, too soon

Warsaw now began the familiar struggle to lift themselves above the other small Northern bands. Gigs were promoted, demos recorded, and another drummer came and went before Steve Morris joined during the late summer. The line-up that was to become Joy Division was now established: Ian Curtis (vocals), Peter Hook (bass), Bernard Sumner (aka Dickin, aka Albrecht, guitar) and Stephen Morris (drums). But, expecting too much too soon, the band became disillusioned and distanced themselves from the music industry. They suffered a further blow to their pride when they had to change their name after the London band Warsaw Pakt released an album late in 1977. 'At that time we felt very detached from things,' Ian Curtis later recalled. 'No one was helping us. It was very disillusioning ... Sometimes we felt like finishing, but it was because everyone ignored us or interfered that we kept thinking "We'll show them".'

Despite their lack of commercial success, the band made considerable progress with their music and lyrics. Ian Curtis drew icy vignettes of his observations of life and, while not interested in politics, captured much of the loss of hope felt by a large segment of Britain's unemployed youth.

In December 1977 they recorded a four-song EP but then refused to release the 5000 7-inch copies because of the poor quality of the pressing. They settled on their new name, Joy Division, after one of the band read the memoirs of a young Jewish girl who was forced to submit to the desires of Nazi soldiers in a concentration camp. They played their first gig under that banner at Manchester's Pips on 25 January 1978. Soon after, the group made another attempt to record, this time an album, but shelved it because they believed that the production was not sufficiently punk. By the summer of 1978, desperation was beginning to take hold –

Left: Lend us your ears . . . Joy Division (from left Steve Morris, Peter Hook, Ian Curtis and Bernard Dickin) sort the wheat from the chaff. Their live act centred around the agonised figure of Ian Curtis (right and insets).

Above left: After Ian Curtis' death, Joy Division's surviving trio were joined by keyboard player Gillian Gilbert (left) to form New Order. Above: Bassist Peter Hook struts his stuff on stage.

they had to put out a record or be forever resigned to being little more than another Northern band caught on the club circuit. There was only one solution and that was to dust off their stock of the 7-inch EPs. After the band spent an entire night folding the sleeves, *An Ideal For Living* was released in June.

At almost the same time Factory Records was set up. It was the combination of the efforts and talents of three people: Tony Wilson, a Granada Television presenter, Alan Erasmus, who was managing Durutti Column with Wilson, and art-college student Peter Saville. Erasmus came up with the name Factory (which was not intended as a reference to Andy Warhol), and they took over a club in a rough part of Manchester to showcase local bands – their four opening nights featuring Durutti Column, Big in Japan, Cabaret Voltaire and Joy Division. That autumn, Martin Hannett, who had produced the Buzzcocks' *Spiral Scratch* EP, joined Factory and, using money that Wilson had inherited, Factory Records released *A Factory Sample*, a double 7-inch that included two new Joy Division tracks and sold out almost immediately.

Factory then made the great leap of faith and, gambling that Joy Division was the group of the moment, spent all their profits plus Wilson's life savings to record the *Unknown Pleasures* LP, which was released in June 1979. Martin Hannett's production made Steve Morris' drums a lead instrument, and added eerie sound effects like the clanking of an old lift and the smashing of glass to Curtis' haunting vocals and Peter Hook's upfront basslines.

Factory called them 'the ultimate Eighties hard-rock group; eloquent, introspective, hysterical'. They distilled the spirit of the economic depression and caught the music business by surprise. Joy Division became, practically overnight, the darlings of the rock press, who clamoured for interviews and photo sessions. These demands were met by the group's increasing withdrawal from the terrifying prospect of rock stardom.

Although the album sold exceptionally well, Joy Division received little airplay because the radio stations, exercising their usual conservative programming, found the group was too gloomy.

New dawn fades

An exception to radio's near blackout was Radio One DJ John Peel, who had broadcast a session with Joy Division some four months before the album came out and repeatedly played the group's single, 'Transmission' (October 1979), and other releases. Peel's contribution was critical to the development of Joy Division's underground cult status, and by 1982 almost a quarter of his listeners' poll was made up of Joy Division and New Order songs.

Records were not, however, the main reason for Joy Division's success. It was the personal spectacle and harrowing intensity of their live dates that remained the basis of it all. Ian Curtis, more troubled in his private life as the months passed, captivated audiences with his jerky, out-of-sync movements and emotion-laden voice. All eyes were drawn to him; the other three members of the band were pleased to melt into the background.

Their tour of Europe in January 1980 was an unqualified success. They went into the studio in March to record their second album, and were about to embark on a major tour of the United States in May when Ian Curtis committed suicide by hanging. Depression, brought about by his apparently progressive epilepsy and the break-up of his marriage, had led to two previous suicide attempts, and he left a note that contained the lines 'At this very moment I wish I were dead. I just can't cope any more.'

The American tour was cancelled immediately, and 'Love Will Tear Us Apart', which sold 160,000 copies and reached Number 13 in the UK charts, was released in June. Their second album, *Closer*, was released in July. The tone of the record was hushed and haunting compared to the raw power of *Unknown Pleasures*; many considered it to be their masterpiece, a chart to the pathways of the dark side of emotion. Another Joy Division single, 'Atmosphere'/'She's Lost Control', was put out later in the year. A final compilation of unreleased tracks and a live concert, the enigmatically-titled double album *Still*, brought the works of Joy Division to a close.

After Curtis' death, much of the world's rock press used their obituaries to create a morbid cult around him. One writer, while disclaiming any 'wish to come over

ghoulish', went as far as to say, 'let his soul fill you. That man cared for you, that man died for you . . .' The members of the band kept their feelings to themselves and carried on. They decided that they would put aside the Joy Division set and write fresh songs under a new name. Their choice – New Order – proved controversial, because it was believed to have fascist overtones, although the band maintained that all it signified was a new start. Within a few months they recorded a new set of demos, did a small number of unadvertised gigs (the first of which was to support A Certain Ratio), and then went off to the US for a four-date tour of the East Coast. Upon their return they asked Gillian Gilbert, a long-time friend of the band who had some previous musical experience in an all-girl punk band, to join them on keyboards.

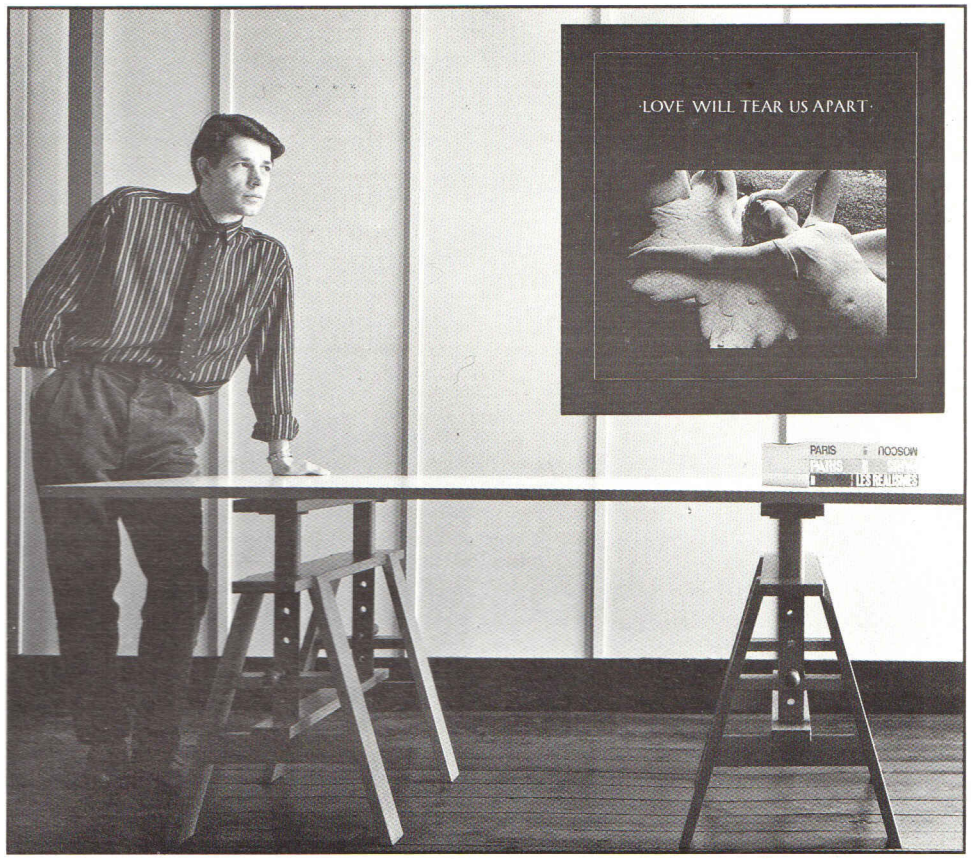
New movement

The expectations held both by fans and journalists alike were daunting. Instead of allowing New Order to develop as any new band would be, they were supposed to emerge complete and without blemishes – an entirely unrealistic demand that put great pressures on the band. They avoided playing London until after the release of their first single, 'Ceremony'/'In A Lonely Place'. Both songs had been written with Ian Curtis, and 'Ceremony' had been performed by Joy Division: a live version appeared on the posthumous LP *Still*. Heaven, the gay disco owned by Virgin Records boss Richard Branson, was the setting for the first London gig in February 1981, and 10,000 people applied for the 1000 tickets. Although the special sound system, a quadrophonic unit ably manned by Martin Hannett, was less than satisfactory, few in the audience noticed it and the electric quality of the night had a powerful impact.

After New Order's first Peel session was broadcast the following week, they entered a period of hectic activity, including a stint in the studio, a tour of England and Scotland and a very successful set of gigs in France, Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Norway. While the recording of the new single, 'Procession'/'Everything's Gone Green' (released in September 1981) had gone well, problems with the new album centred around Martin Hannett's production – the last he did with the band. New Order's manager, Rob Gretton – who was more a member of the group than a professional manager – wrote that 'we were happy with the songs, not all happy with the production,' but Hannett's final split with Factory may also have entered into it. Bernard was having personal problems at the time, and there were rumours that autumn of the imminent disintegration of the band.

At long last, in November 1981, New Order's first album, *Movement*, was released to lukewarm reviews and very strong sales. Its sonorous melodies and languorous rhythms were more of a glance back at Joy Division than a bold step forward, and the album did little to expand their audience. It was not until April 1982 that the group to develop the brighter rhythmic base of 'Everything's Gone Green' into the dance gem 'Temptation', which achieved New Order's highest chart placing so far at Number 29. During a 10-day European tour that month, their habit of playing short sets and rarely giving encores sparked off a riot in Rotterdam.

Their month-long tour of Australia and New Zealand late in 1982 was almost exactly the opposite; they played fairly long sets, got on well with their audiences, and performed some encores, including a long jam with John Cooper Clarke, who was co-billed with them on a number of dates. It was almost as though New Order were setting the stage for 1983's shift in image from melancholic recluses to fun-loving pranksters. Those who followed the group had noticed the gradual change in their live set to bouncier, more dance-oriented songs.



Joy Division and New Order's striking record sleeves were the work of designer Peter Saville (above).

Blue millionaires

The massive club hit 'Blue Monday' was released in March 1983 and made UK singles history for a number of reasons. It was released in a 12-inch only format, and peaked at Number 12 in April 1983, but it re-entered the chart that September, rose rapidly (passing New Order's follow-up single, 'Confusion' – another 12-inch, recorded in collaboration with New York disco producer Arthur Baker, which had reached the same Number 12 position two weeks earlier), and entered the Top Ten in October. Worldwide, 'Blue Monday' sold over a million copies.

New Order's second album, *Power, Corruption And Lies*, took its title from the notes on the back of a paperback edition of Orwell's *Animal Farm*: 'This is a tale of power, corruption and lies'. Its release in May 1983 highlighted the band's new openness, both lyrically and in their relations with the press, as they gave interviews for the first time in years. Delightfully independent of the rock machine, they could use it for their own purposes. There was no need to move to a major label, since they owned a sizeable interest in Factory Communications Ltd, not to mention the 1650-capacity Hacienda club in Manchester. With Peter Saville at the design helm, their record packaging, which tended to infuriate the rock press with its obscurity, was often as inventive and exotic as their music. New Order had succeeded in influencing the contemporary music scene rather than being influenced by it.

MARK JOHNSON

Joy Division
Recommended Listening

Closer (Factory FAC 25) (Includes: Heart And Soul, Twenty Four Hours, Passover, Decades, The Eternal, Atrocity Exhibition).

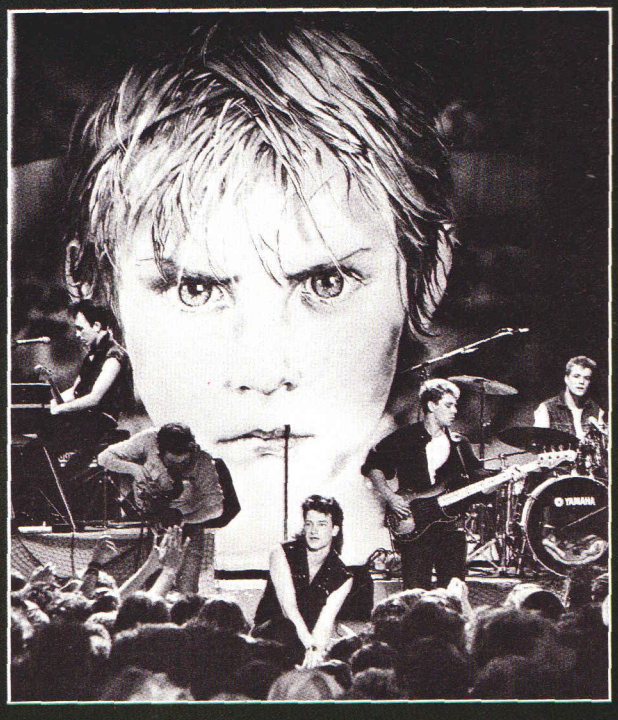
New Order
Recommended Listening

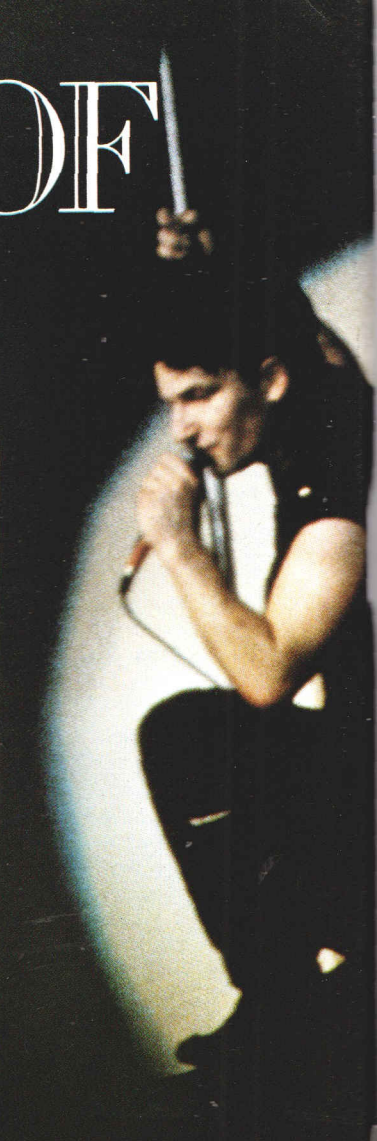
Power, Corruption And Lies (Factory FAC 75) (Includes: Age Of Consent, We All Stand, The Village, Blue Monday, The Beach, Kiwi).

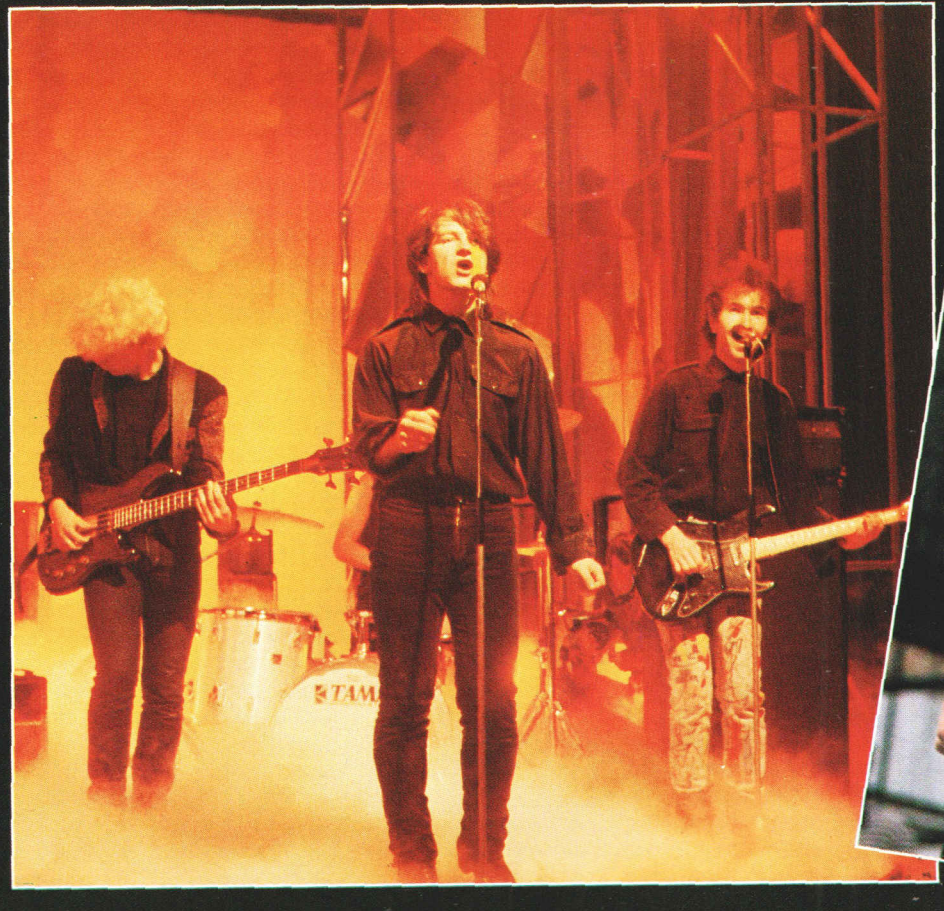
SONGS OF PRAISE

Fire and fervour from Ireland's U2

U2, ONE OF IRELAND'S most successful rock bands ever, seemed something of an anachronism when they arrived on the scene in 1980. The group had a guitar-based sound at a time of keyboard techno-pop and Christian commitment within the renowned hedonism of rock'n'roll. In The Edge (real name David Evans), they had perhaps the most distinctive guitarist of their generation, while in singer Bono Vox (real name Paul Hewson) they had one of rock's most passionate performers. And although some linked U2 with the 'new psychedelia' of the Psychedelic Furs and Echo and the Bunnymen, and others saw them as just an orthodox rock group, the band had a power, passion and subtlety that singled them out from the pack.







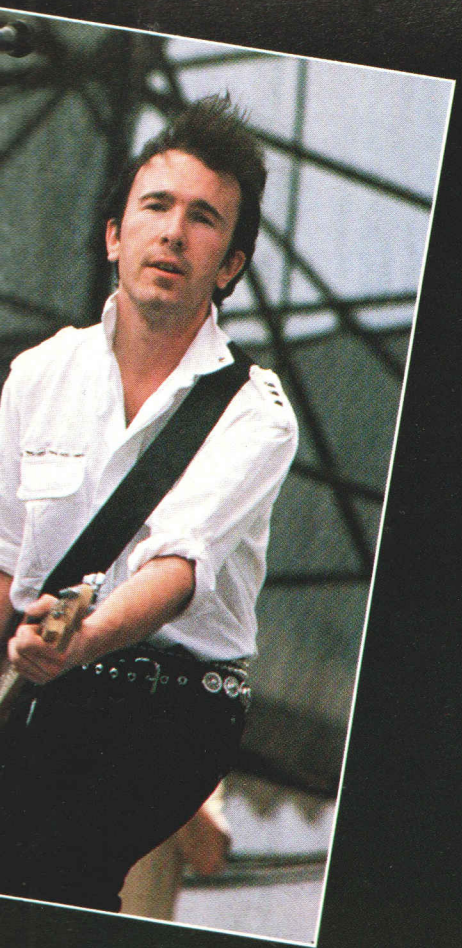
Eleven o'clock rock

Like so many born at the turn of the Sixties, it was the shock waves of punk – and the New York new-wave music of Patti Smith and Television in particular – that spurred Bono, The Edge, Larry Mullen (drums) and Adam Clayton (bass) into forming a band. They had met at Dublin's Mount Temple School, a 'progressive comprehensive', and in 1977 held their first rehearsal in the kitchen of Larry Mullen who, as a former member of the Artane Boys' Band, had his own drum kit.

Initially, Bono played guitar along with The Edge but his instrumental shortcomings meant that he was shortly moved to vocals. By the following year, the four had written a substantial amount of original material and were proficient enough to appear in public. They worked the Dublin club circuit, held an open-air concert in the city's largest car park, ventured south for one-off performances.

The band's hard work was rewarded in 1979 with a CBS Eire contract for an EP, *U23*, which reached Eire's Top Ten. The group's growing popularity in their native country was underlined further when they came top in five categories of the readers poll of *Hot Press*, Ireland's leading rock journal. Then, in December 1979, the band visited London for the first time, financing their own mini-tour of venues like the Hope and Anchor (where only nine people turned up) and the Rock Garden. Despite poor attendances, Island Records were sufficiently impressed to offer U2 a contract and in May 1980, their first single, '11 O'Clock Tick Tock', produced by Martin Hannett, was released.

In the summer, the group teamed up with producer Steve Lillywhite to record their debut album. Released in October, *Boy* was an examination of adolescent tensions that cut a niche somewhere between contemporary pop and traditional hard-edged rock. The LP burned with intensity, completely vindicating Bono's declaration that rock music should be 'loud, glorious and aggressive'. Highly



acclaimed by critics, the album reached Number 52 in the UK charts.

The shimmering, floating, chiming guitar sounds of The Edge, the soulful attack of Bono's voice, the percussive bass patterns of Clayton and the military-style power of Larry Mullen's drums had established a unique sound that was both challenging and uplifting. U2 were to attract the attention of Bruce Springsteen, who delayed his return home from a British tour to catch the group in concert, and Pete Townshend, who said he felt like giving up playing guitar after hearing The Edge, and thousands of lesser-known persons who turned up to see the band on tour in Britain, Europe and America during the winter of 1980.

Although U2 used no visual effects and eschewed the dictates of fashion, on stage they never failed to engage attention; Bono would move around the stage with boundless energy, exhorting his audiences to participate and scaling scaffolding towers to sing out his messages. Reviews of U2's shows were generally ecstatic, commenting on the bond between the group and its followers and the feeling of celebration released by the music. Unlike the punk acts that had inspired them, U2 used their aggression to uplift audiences, claiming that the effect they wanted was one of relief and cleansing. 'I don't like music unless it has a healing effect,' Bono declared. 'I want people to leave our concerts feeling positive, a bit more free.'

Hearts on fire

In July 1981, the group finally broke into the British singles charts with 'Fire', which reached Number 35, and three months later a second album, *October*, emerged. Produced like its predecessor by Steve Lillywhite, *October* was in the same stylistic vein as *Boy*, although the songs of teenage trauma made way for major spiritual themes and Biblical allusions reflecting the faith shared by all the band members bar Adam Clayton. The album was a wide commercial success, reaching Number 11 in the UK, and by the time the band returned to Ireland in 1982, to play their first homeland tour for over a year, they had established themselves as a worldwide musical force.

A third album, *War*, was released in January 1983 and while reviewers cooled a little, seemingly wary of the groups's religious leanings, it went gold in America, made Number 1 in the UK and yielded a British Top Ten single in 'New Year's Day'. On *War*, the group's overall sound was more rhythmic and less reliant on The Edge's guitar-work; in addition, the music was filled out on certain tracks by the violin of Steve Wickham, the trumpet of Kenny Fradley and the voices of the Coconuts, and yet the group sacrificed none of their previous intensity.

For almost the first time, the lyrics tackled specific topics – the troubles in Poland and Ulster, the nuclear threat; as Bono said: 'A lot of the songs on our last album were quite abstract but *War* is intentionally more direct.' Yet the songs offered no solutions beyond that of personal renewal. In keeping with the group's spiritual outlook, they located problems within the individual human heart, speaking in 'Sunday Bloody Sunday' of 'the trenches we dug within our hearts'.

Such emotions, derived from U2's faith, are unusual in the business of rock'n'roll which traditionally has had more sympathy for the Devil and where rebellion is not expected from Bible believers. But as Bono has explained: 'Ultimately the group is totally rebellious because of our stance against what people accept as rebellion.' With their idealism and anger, their joy and outspokenness, U2 sometimes appear to be a combination of Sixties hippie and Seventies punk. 'We have a love and emotion without the flowers in our hair,' Bono once suggested. 'And aggression without safety pins in our noses.'

By the end of 1983, with the success of both *War* and a live album, *Under A Blood Red Sky*, under their belts and guitar sounds coming back into vogue in the hands of groups like Big Country, U2's future seemed secure. As the *NME* commented: 'U2 are a rock rarity – a band who have actually become tougher with maturity rather than blanding out as most of their contemporaries have done. They are one of the few bands to retain the idealism of 1976, looking on rock music as a great quest rather than a career . . . Being among the last of the rock idealists sometimes seems a good place to be.'

STEVE TURNER

Above far left: U2 perform in front of the Irish child whose face graced the covers of their LPs Boy *and* War. *Above left: Bono Vox sees the light. Far left: The band appear on 'Top Of The Pops'. Left: The Edge. Above right: U2, from left Adam Clayton, The Edge, Bono and Larry Mullen.*

U2
Recommended Listening

Boy (Island ILPS 9646) (Includes: I Will Follow, Into The Heart, Out Of Control, Twilight, The Electric Co.); *War* (Island ILPS 9733) (Includes: Sunday Bloody Sunday, Two Hearts Beat As One, Seconds, '40', New Year's Day).

POSTCARD FROM SCOTLAND

Labels and bands from north of the border

'THE SOUND of young Scotland' was a phrase coined to describe the wave of Scottish bands that sprang up at the end of the Seventies and the beginning of the Eighties. To a music press accustomed to identifying music by region – the 'Liverpool sound', the 'Coventry sound', the 'Sheffield sound' – it was a handy label. But it was also slightly misleading, since Scotland is not a city but a country. Three distinct local scenes, based in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, blended together under that catch-phrase.

Below: Dundee's Associates consisted of fiery singer Billy Mackenzie (right) and guitarist/keyboard-player Alan Rankine.

The blueprint for the independent music labels that were to foster the boom in Scottish music was Zoom Records in Edinburgh. The label was formed by Bruce Findlay, who had run the successful Bruce's chain of record stores with his brother until the mid-Seventies price-cutting war put them out of business. Zoom released their first record, 'For Adults Only'/'Robot Love' by the Valves, in September 1977 and rapidly became a clearing house for young Scots hopefuls: Midge Ure, later of the Rich Kids and Ultravox, was an early Zoom act, recording for the label with his band Slik under the pseudonym PVC2. The label also passed on the Associates' early demos – including a cover of Bowie's 'Boys Keep Swinging', eventually released on MCA – before striking it lucky with Simple Minds.

Originally a punk band from Glasgow called Johnny and the Self Abusers, Simple Minds turned out to be the commercial giants of the Scottish boom. Their three albums for Zoom/Arista sold in substantial quantities before the band signed to Virgin and had hit albums with *Sons And Fascination/Sister Feelings Call* (1981), *New Gold Dream* (1982) and *Sparkle In The Rain* (1984).

Round the Horne

Whereas Bruce Findlay could be seen as a father figure to the fledgling Scots bands he signed, Postcard Records' Alan Horne was in the same age group as his early signings Orange Juice, Josef K and Aztec Camera. Postcard's early output was well received – ecstatically in some quarters – and for a while, in 1980 and 1981, the names Postcard and Alan Horne were on everybody's lips. Orange Juice earned much of the early praise with a fine succession of early singles: 'Falling And Laughing', 'Blueboy', 'Simply Thrilled Honey' (all 1980) and 'Poor Old Soul' (1981). In addition to his songwriting abilities, lead singer and guitarist Edwyn Collins was a natural showman, and the music press took him to their hearts.

Aztec Camera shared Orange Juice's gift for gentle, acoustic arrangements which subtly evoked a variety of subdued emotions. After signing to Postcard in 1980, they released two highly acclaimed singles, 'Just Like Gold' and 'Mattress Of Wire' and went through a number of personnel changes, although the nucleus of the group remained singer, songwriter and guitarist Roddy Frame and bassist Campbell Owens. In 1982, they signed to Rough Trade, and recorded their debut album, *High Land, Hard Rain*, before moving to WEA Records to enjoy a Top Twenty hit single, 'Oblivious', in 1983.

Stablemates Josef K were equally promising. Although their early output was overshadowed by that of Orange Juice, 'Radio Drill Time' and 'It's Kinda Funny' (both 1980) were excellent singles. Disagreements between the band's two frontmen, Paul Haig and guitarist Malcolm Ross, over recording techniques led to the

Orange Juice

Above: Orange Juice singer Edwyn Collins, a constant factor in the group's changing line-up.

MUCH OF ORANGE JUICE'S early charm lay in their naivety and coyness which, although endearing to some, was insufferable to others. Their early Postcard singles, 'Blueboy', 'Falling And Laughing' (both 1980) and 'Poor Old Soul' (1981) had a certain magic, but by the time they signed to Polydor and released their first LP, *You Can't Hide Your Love Forever* (1982), the appeal of singer Edwyn Collins' fey looks and wistful songs was wearing thin. Enough fans bought the album, however, to keep it in the charts for some six weeks, peaking at Number 21. Two minor hit singles sprang from the album, guitarist James Kirk's 'Felicity' and a ragged attempt at a cover of the Al Green classic 'L.O.V.E.'

Collins then reformed the band completely; out went Kirk and drummer Steven Daly, to be replaced by Malcolm Ross – from former Postcard stablemates Josef K – and Zeke Manyika respectively, leaving only Collins and bassist David McClymont from the previous line-up. This had the effect of toughening up the band and cutting away the cuteness, while retaining the more durable elements of their early sound. Their image changed accordingly: Edwyn abandoned his furry hats, cuddly fringe and boyish shorts for natty suits and a spruce haircut.

A second album, *Rip It Up*, was released at the end of 1982 and the title track became the band's biggest hit single, reaching Number 8 in the UK charts the following spring. David and Malcolm then left, leaving the remaining duo to ponder their future.

BERT MUIRHEAD

group's break-up. Ross later joined Orange Juice, while Haig pursued a solo career. An album, *The Only Fun In Town* (1981), was released after the group's demise.

By mid-1981, Postcard Records was at its peak, and so was the Scottish music scene in general. A number of good Scottish contributors to the weekly music press ensured that the scene received regular coverage, while Glasgow – which for years had had very few good music venues – suddenly produced a number of new nightclubs and discos. A whole crop of exciting new bands sprang up: the Fire Engines, with their gritty, punky instrumentals, the more traditional TV21, the poppy Delmontes, the President's Men, the Laughing Apple, APB, Leisure Process, the Bluebells, Hey Elastica!, Boots For Dancing, Bourgie Bourgie, the Jazzateers and a host of others.

The north of Scotland also produced its own music scene. Aberdeen was the home of Oily Records, which enjoyed some early success with singles by the President's Men, the Squibs and the Tools, before things really took off with the success of local band APB. Their second single, 'I'd Like To Shoot You Down' (1981) found its way to an FM station in Philadelphia, and from there to the New York clubs. A promotions firm called Rockpool circulated the single to 200 clubs, radio stations and DJs. They were soon playing on the same bill as soul star James Brown.

Simple Minds

Above: Simple Minds keep feeling fascination. Left: Singer Jim Kerr puts his trousers to the test.

GLASGOW'S SIMPLE MINDS – singer Jim Kerr, guitarist Charlie Burchill, drummer Brian McGee, keyboard player Michael McNeill and bassist Derek Forbes – originally signed to Zoom Records, but a distribution deal was soon arranged through Arista. Their first three LPs – *Life In A Day*, *Real To Real Cacophony* (both 1979) and *Empires And Dance* (1980) – were a strange mixture of influences, from Roxy Music to Sixties psychedelia, and ranged from the very serious to the eminently danceable.

It was the third of these that consolidated their reputation and contained the best song of their early days, 'I Travel'. After a prestigious European tour with Peter Gabriel in 1980, they signed to Virgin Records and recorded their strongest albums to date, *Sons And Fascination* and *Sister Feelings Call* (initially issued together as a double-pack but later sold separately), and reached the Number 11 position in the album chart.

The band were now rapidly establishing themselves, and some excellent promotional videos kept up the momentum during the band's extensive tours. In 1982, their album *New Gold Dream* soared to Number 3 in the UK and also did well in the US. Two Top Twenty singles followed, 'Promised You A Miracle' and 'Glittering Prize'. A UK Top Ten single, 'Waterfront', and another series of tours in 1983, established them as one of the most internationally successful new Scottish bands.

BERT MUIRHEAD

Dundee cakewalk

Dundee was the home of the Associates, whose rise to success was as sudden as their fall from it. The Associates were basically the duo of Alan Rankine and vocalist Billie Mackenzie, although they worked with other musicians like former Cure bassist Michael Dempsey and drummer John Murphy. Their debut album, *The Affectionate Punch* (1980), wedded intense, Bowie-influenced soul vocals with abrasive, 'experimental' sounds, and was released on Fiction Records to extravagant critical praise in 1980. After a spell on Situation 2 Records, they signed to WEA and enjoyed a series of UK hit singles – 'Party Fears Two' (Number 9), 'Club Country' (Number 13) and '18 Carat Love Affair'/'Love Hangover' (Number 21) – in 1982. Their 1982 LP, *Sulk*, also made the UK album chart Top Ten, but the Associates could not live up to the intense commercial expectations their success brought about, and split early in 1983.

Aztec Camera (above) started life on Postcard Records before going on to have a Top Twenty hit with 'Oblivious' in 1983.

The Associates were not the only Scottish band of the period who failed to live up their early promise. The Shakin' Pyramids from Glasgow did much to pioneer the rockabilly revival, only to be overshadowed by the Stray Cats, while TV21, whose debut album *The Thin Red Line* (1981) was widely praised, split up after supporting the Rolling Stones on the Scottish dates of their 1982 tour.

But if the Scottish boom had given some bands unrealistic hopes, it also put the country on the map. The success of Simple Minds, Orange Juice and Big Country ensured a bright future for Scottish music.

BERT MUIRHEAD

Skids

THE SKIDS were one of the first of the Scottish bands to make a breakthrough at the end of the Seventies. Their early single, 'Reasons', released on No Bad Records of Dunfermline in 1978, regular appearances in the pages of the punk fanzines and the patronage of John Peel led to a contract with Virgin Records. Lead singer Richard Jobson became the darling of the music press and he was keen to live up to his media image as a literary dilettante.

Together with guitarist Stuart Adamson, Jobson formed a songwriting team that produced 10 hit singles in just over two years. Their first LP, the raw and punky *Scared To Dance*, spent 10 weeks in the album charts early in 1979, while the single from it, 'Into The Valley', reached Number 10. Their second LP, *Days In Europa* (1979), contained the hit singles 'Charade' and 'Working For The Yankee Dollar'.

However, Jobson's growing artistic pretentions – which found their way onto the Skids' third album *The Absolute Game* (1980) – were alienating Stuart Adamson, who quit soon after the LP's release. Jobson carried on with bassist Russell Webb, recording a final album, *Joy* (1981), which explored Celtic folksong. He then retired from the music scene to pursue his interests in acting and poetry. He returned to rock singing in 1983 with a new band, the Armoury Show, but this new project was overshadowed by his former sidekick Stuart Adamson, who had refined the basic Skids sound with his group, Big Country, and was storming the charts on both sides of the Atlantic.

BERT MUIRHEAD

Below: Jobson (centre) with future Big Country guitarist Stuart Adamson (right).

ECHO and the BUNNYMEN

The pride of the Liverpool scene

IF LONDON SEEMED to be the focal point of attention and activity in rock music during 1976 and 1977 as punk rose to its peak of excitement, by the beginning of 1978, the emphasis was beginning to shift away from the capital. For a few years at least, the most intriguing musical developments would occur elsewhere in the UK.

The age of innocence

In Liverpool, punk had had its day and a number of the city's would-be musicians and legendary heroes – Pete Wylie, Julian Cope and Ian 'Mac' McCulloch among them – were seeking to become involved in music that was richer, stranger and more adventurous. These three individuals had briefly formed a group called the Crucial Three before ego-clashes led to a split, with Wylie and Cope respectively drifting off to form Wah! Heat and the Teardrop Explodes.

Ian McCulloch was every bit as determined to become a rock legend as his former partners; he started looking around for kindred spirits who shared his passion for the sounds and styles of David Bowie and the Velvet Underground. After the failure of a further venture, A Shallow Madness, he met bassist Les Pattison and guitarist Will Sergeant at Eric's in Liverpool and Echo and the Bunnymen began to take shape. Gigging in their home town in the autumn of 1978, using a drum machine (which became known as 'Echo'), they soon attracted the interest of entrepreneurs Bill Drummond and Dave Balfe, who were looking for bands to sign to their independent Zoo label.

From the very start the Bunnymen were determined to succeed. Their comparative inexperience as musicians and performers helped them avoid the clichés of most rock groups, while their unswerving belief in

themselves soon won them a considerable following. The androgynously pretty McCulloch (rhythm guitar and lead vocals) proved to be a truly charismatic frontman; his obscure but bleakly humorous lyrics helped define the band's intriguing, brooding sound, which was reminsicent of the Doors and Television in its spare clarity. Among a crop of independent singles released in March 1979, Echo and the Bunnymen's 'Pictures On My Wall' (featuring keyboards by David Balfe) had the edge, encouraging critics to link their name with Manchester's Joy Division as two of the bands most likely to lead rock music into exciting new areas.

Tigers in the smoke

As their reputation spread, Pete De Freitas joined on drums to instil the power that the drum machine had lacked. 'Rescue', their second single (released in April 1980) established them as *the* emerging cult band, while their debut LP, the critically acclaimed *Crocodiles* (1980), demonstrated their great potential. As Mac was to boast at the end of that year, which was to see the album make Number 17 in the UK charts: 'It feels like there's hundreds of bands in Liverpool, but we're about the only one I can think of as being a potentially *great* band.'

During the course of regular touring over the next 12 months, they entered their controversial 'camouflage' phase. In an attempt to intensify their already considerable live impact, they created a steamy jungle atmosphere, with lashings of dry ice and rolls of camouflage netting, that was reminiscent of the Francis Ford Coppola film *Apocalypse Now* (1979). This uncharacteristic extravagance brought them their first taste of harsh criticism in the rock press; a subsequent single, 'The Puppet' (released in the winter of 1980), drew only lukewarm praise.

The band's optimism remained undimmed by these minor setbacks, however: in the following year they took part in a video film, *Shine So Hard*, which contained footage of the group playing live at the Pavilion Gardens, Buxton. An EP, also entitled *Shine So Hard*, was released in May and took them into the UK Top Thirty for the first time.

Their next LP, *Heaven Up Here* (1981), finally established them as a major force, being voted Album of the Year by readers of *New Musical Express* and making Number 10 in the charts. Their manager Bill Drummond summed up the mood and mythical qualities of their songs at this time when he wrote in the *Face*: 'They represent cold, dampness, darkness. Echo is, in my crazy daydream, a ghostly God – and the Bunnymen are his followers.'

The next year, however, proved to be a particularly difficult one for the group, despite chart success with 'The Back Of Love' (a Number 19 hit). With this single, perhaps the nearest the Bunnymen had come to a pure pop sound, their appeal stretched to the teenage pin-up market for the first time. This sudden development seemed to confuse the band; although their live performances constantly gained in authority, they appeared to be having trouble writing new songs. *Heaven Up Here*'s successor, *Porcupine*, took 18 months to appear, being released in 1983.

Opposite: Echo and the Bunnymen in 'moody' pose; clockwise from left Ian McCulloch, Will Sergeant, Pete De Freitas and Les Pattison. Above: 'Mac' shows off his haircut. Below: Real live Bunnies.

Although their most successful album in commercial terms, *Porcupine* was generally felt to be their least accomplished. Although the single taken from it, 'The Cutter' (a Number 8 hit) showed them at their most coherent, uncluttered and uplifting, the remainder of the LP – which largely documented their own recent period of struggle as a band – failed to equal the power of its predecessor.

As they entered 1984, their resolve to re-define rock in an original, distinctive way was a strong as ever. Echo and the Bunnymen had proved themselves more consistent and convincing than their home rivals the Teardrop Explodes and Wah! Their humour, creative ambitions and fierce pride might stem largely from the great mythology of their Liverpool roots. The sense of adventure, drama and emotion in their music, however, were more typical of a rock tradition that has given birth to the likes of the Doors, the Velvet Underground and Joy Division. Echo and the Bunnymen were among those few bands in the Eighties making rock music of rare, consuming rapture and lyrical depth.

JONH WILDE

Echo and the Bunnyman Recommended Listening

Heaven Up Here (Korova KOW 58 320) (Includes: The Disease, Heaven Up Here, Turquoise Dogs, Show Of Strength, It Was A Pleasure, No Dark Things); *Porcupine* (Korova KODE 6) (Includes: The Cutter, Porcupine, Higher Hell, Gods Will Be Gods, Heads Will Roll, Back Of Love).

Eric's AND AFTER

The club that harboured a new Mersey beat

In 1964, Liverpool had been the pop music capital of the world. The Beatles had conquered America and a host of other Merseybeat acts were attempting to emulate the feats of the Fab Four. But when the Mersey boom burned out later in the decade, Liverpool was left with no identifiable rock scene of its own. At the end of the Seventies, however, the city drew breath and prepared itself to hit the country again with a new breed of home-grown music.

Although the musical outlooks of Sixties Merseybeat and the Seventies new wave were very different, they had two things in common: both scenes centred around, and grew out of, one specific club – the Cavern in the case of Merseybeat, Eric's in the Seventies – and both scenes were highly incestuous in nature, with groups trading ideas and swapping personnel quite regularly.

The new sound of Liverpool can be traced back to January 1974 when a collection of Liverpool art-school students formed a band called Deaf School. Unlike any Liverpudlian group before, Deaf School were a camp, theatrical, arty band whose music was criticised as being over-derivative of Roxy Music. Despite three strong albums for Warner Brothers, Deaf School's following remained largely local and in 1978 they disbanded.

Crucial relations

Among Deaf School's musicians, now let loose on a revitalised music scene, had been Clive Langer (later to produce Liverpool's own the Teardrop Explodes and the Yachts as well as Madness), Bette Bright (who went on to enjoy a reasonably successful solo career), Steve Lindsey (later to join Big in Japan and then form the Planets) and Steve Allen (who in December 1978 teamed up with ex-Big in Japan guitarist Ian Broudie to form the London-based Original Mirrors).

Deaf School fans were also to play crucial roles in the development of Liverpool's new age. Three of the group's most devoted followers had been David Balfe (who was to play with Radio Blank, Dalek I Love You, Big in Japan, Lori and the Chameleons and the Teardrop Explodes), Pete Wylie (who would form Wah! Heat) and Ian McCulloch (who would form Echo and the Bunnymen). They would religiously turn up at Deaf School gigs and afterwards congregate in the trendy Arts Theatre café. Trendy, that is, until the opening of Eric's in 1976.

Situated symbolically near the rubble that had been the Cavern, Eric's was just as dingy. Under the managerial auspices of ex-public relations man Roger Eagle, the club remained the showplace for any punk band that would play there until its enforced closure in March 1980. Often

bands were booked for the sheer idiocy of their name and any group who claimed to be Liverpudlian would be guaranteed a stage, however bad they were.

On 5 May 1977 the Clash played Eric's; in the audience were McCulloch, Wylie and Julian Cope who, brought together by the sheer physical compression of the place, decided that they too must form a band. The prophetically-named Crucial Three never played live and split up after only a month, McCulloch's love for melodic tunes clashing with Cope's devotion to the avant-garde American group Pere Ubu. Nevertheless, the seeds had been sown of a desire to make music and of a creative rivalry that was to dominate their respective careers.

The art of bluff

At the same Clash gig, 23-year-old ex-theatre manager Bill Drummond had also been inspired to form a band and, with various friends, put together Big in Japan, a band that was to become the missing link between the theatrics of Deaf School and the amateurism of punk. They played trashy pop, went through five line-ups and came up for many a potential record deal. However, in August 1978 they played their final gig at Eric's and Drummond decided to form an independent record label with fellow group member David Balfe.

While Stiff and Rough Trade undermined the stranglehold of the big companies in the South, the only northern indie label of note was Factory in Manchester. But now, with financial support from the Merseyside Visual Communications Unit, the Zoo label swung into action with a farewell Big in Japan EP, *From Y To Z And Never Again*.

Following the swift demise of the Crucial Three, meanwhile, Cope, McCulloch and Pete Wylie had formed, disbanded and re-formed groups, together and separately, which were, as often as not, just a ridiculous name with no words or music. It was not until late 1978, when Cope and McCulloch played debut gigs at Eric's with their new bands, the Teardrop Explodes and Echo and the Bunnymen, that they showed signs of forging careers in music. Both groups were swiftly signed up by Zoo, who released their first singles early in 1979.

Pete Wylie was slower to make his vinyl debut. He formed his own Wah! Heat in 1979 and the group's first single, 'Better Scream'/'Joe', emerged the following February on the independent Inevitable label. Dropping the Heat from their name, Wah! formed their own Eternal label which was distributed by WEA. Their debut album, *Nah Poo – The Art Of Bluff*

Above left: The Teardrop Explodes on stage shortly before their demise in 1982. Top right: Pete Wylie of Wah! adjusts his cap for the camera. Above right: The crowds gather outside Eric's, the club where the new sound of Liverpool was born. Right: Julian Cope ponders.

(1981) was a commercial disaster, however, and it was not until 1983 that they began to realise their potential with 'The Story Of The Blues', an epic, Phil Spector-inspired number which reached Number 3 in the singles charts in January.

Treason in the playroom

Meanwhile, the Teardrop Explodes, named after a line in a Marvel comic strip, had gone through a succession of line-ups under the headstrong domination of Julian Cope. Contrary to the stark, depressed coldness of many of their contemporaries, the Teardrop Explodes played pop music with melodies – and, despite Cope's uncompromising attitude to the rock business, the band was signed by Mercury in the summer of 1980. In October, *Kilimanjaro*, a fine collection of intriguing songs that revealed Julian Cope's growing interest in Sixties psychedelia, reached Number 24 in the album charts and the following February the group scored a Number 6 hit with 'Reward', a wonderfully theatrical number based around a strong vocal melody, melodramatic horns and distinctive keyboards.

Soon the Teardrop Explodes were appearing on BBC-TV's 'Top Of The Pops', identified as the band in leather flying jackets and acclaimed as the forerunners of a Liverpool explosion. Further hit singles followed with 'Treason (It's Just A Story)' (Number 18) and the Sixties pop-tinged 'Passionate Friend' (Number 25), while a second album, *Wilder* (1981), confirmed Cope's psychedelic obsessions, both lyrically and musically, and reached Number 29. However, squabbles within the group had led to numerous personnel changes, and Cope's egotistical leadership finally brought the Teardrop Explodes to a halt in 1982. Julian continued to write music and use ex-Teardrop musicians for a solo career, but by the end of 1983 only one single, 'Sunshine Playroom', had appeared – and disappeared.

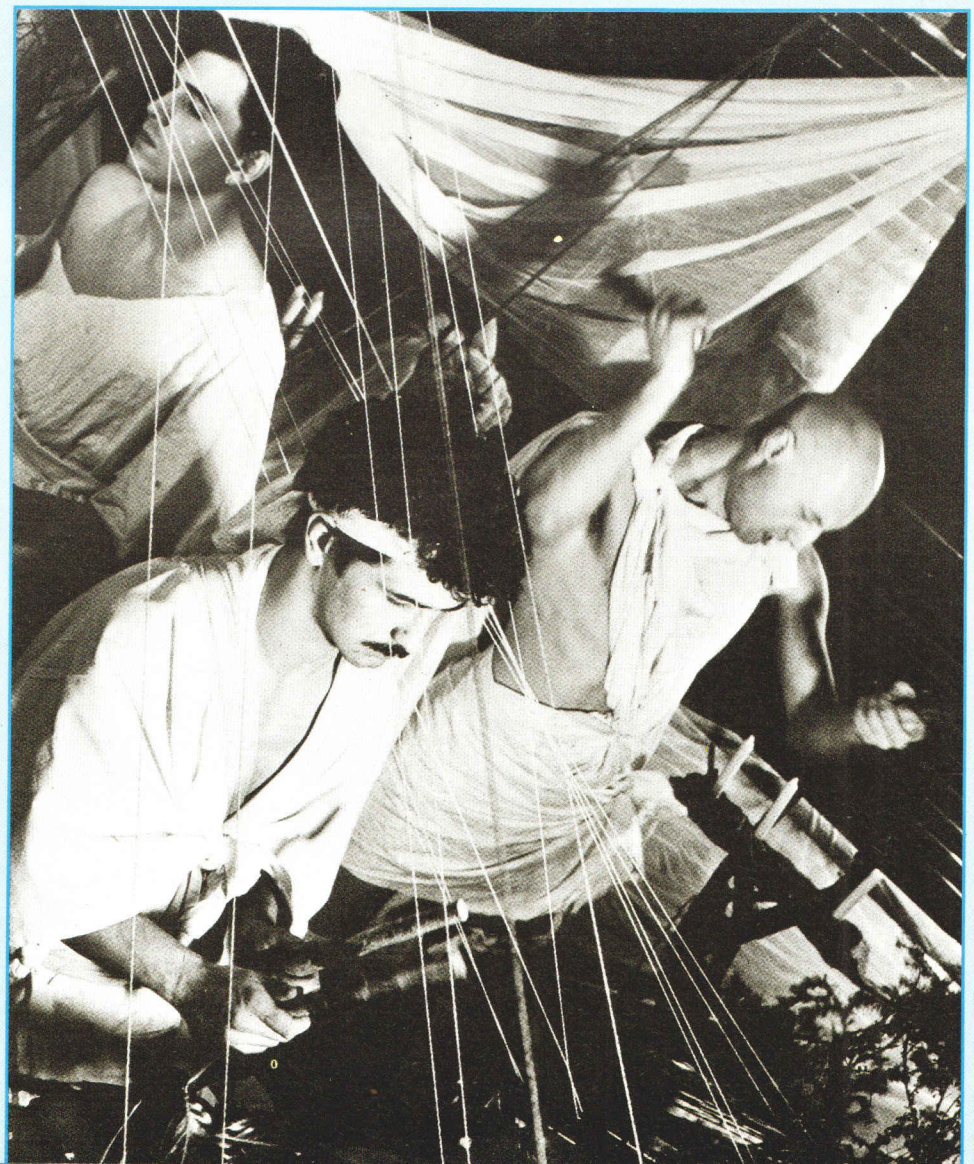
The triple echo

To Cope's probable dismay, it was his arch-rival Ian McCulloch's Echo and the Bunnymen who were to prove the most successful of all the new Liverpudlian acts, with consistently high album sales and a large and devoted following. When their second album, *Heaven Up Here*, was voted Album of the Year in the 1981 *New Musical Express* reader's poll, the Bunnymen had come a long way from playing shambolic gigs with a drum machine at Eric's.

In many ways, to talk of a 'Liverpool sound' is misleading, for the new scene encompassed such a wide range of musical ideas – from the power pop of the Planets, through the primal scream antics of Pink Military (fronted by former Big in Japan *chanteuse* Jayne Casey) to the minimalist electro-rock of Dalek I Love You, to cite just three examples. Although Merseyside's new wave had nothing like the impact of Merseybeat, it was an exciting, vibrant movement which guaranteed that Liverpool would be remembered as a musical city for the Eighties as it had been for the Sixties.

SALLY PAYNE

Above: Deaf School proved to be a strong influence on Liverpool's new bands. Below: Electro-rockers Dalek I Love You.



THE GREAT MUSICIANS

Jon Lord

Above and overleaf: Jon Lord attacks his Hammond organ with the style and energy for which he has become renowned in his two decades in UK rock.

As one of the prime exponents of the Hammond organ, Jon Lord has probably had more of a consistent influence on contemporary rock music than any other British keyboard player. Eminently capable of the flamboyant displays produced by his knife-throwing and cape-wearing peers, Lord always seems to have managed to integrate his playing with that of the other musicians around him, generally producing a more balanced and satisfying result.

Born in Leicester on 9 June 1941, he studied classical piano from the age of nine, and later attended the Central School of Speech and Drama for three years. After playing around the London R&B circuit with the likes of the Bill Ashton Combo and Red Bludd's Bluesicians, Lord rose to prominence in the early Sixties with the Artwoods, an excellent R&B/soul band fronted by Art Wood, brother of future Rolling Stone Ron Wood. Hints of what was to come could be heard on such tracks as a cover of Jimmy Smith's 'Walk On The Wild Side' from the Artwoods' one Decca LP, *Art Gallery* (1964).

After the Artwoods disbanded in the summer of 1967, Lord joined the Flowerpot Men, a group formed to capitalise on the success of the studio-produced hit single 'Let's Go To San Francisco'. After flogging the hit around the one-nighter circuit, Lord and bassist Nick Simper left in February 1968 to form Deep Purple with guitarist Ritchie Blackmore, drummer Ian Paice and singer Rod Evans.

From the opening swirling chords of 'And The Address', featured on the debut album *Shades Of Deep Purple* (1968), it was clear that Jon Lord's keyboard-work was a force to be reckoned with, offering both a serious challenge to and a perfect foil for Blackmore's manic guitar of that period. The same album saw Lord betraying his classical background in the instrumental section of 'Mandrake Root', playing Bach-like figures over an Eastern-flavoured rock backdrop. This juxtaposition of rock and classical influences continued through the band's next two albums. *The Book Of Taliesyn* and *Deep Purple* (both 1969), and was well illustrated on the former by a track that employed a small string section (arranged by Lord) to provide a beautiful framework for one of Blackmore's more articulate blues solos.

The trend was further exemplified on *Deep Purple* by 'April', a three-part suite which opened with Lord's church-like Hammond organ setting the mood. A choir and a small orchestra, again arranged by Lord, were featured during this piece, further illustrating his fascination for using rock instruments in an arranged, classically structured setting.

This combination of rock and the classics resulted in 1970's *Concerto For Group And Orchestra*, performed by Deep Purple (now with Ian Gillan and Roger Glover on vocals and bass respectively) and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall on 24 September 1969, conducted by Malcolm Arnold. Received with mixed critical reactions, the concert itself was a huge success, providing the springboard for Deep Purple's British breakthrough which had so far eluded them. As Lord himself said at the time: 'What puzzles me is that an evening which was intended to be, and in fact turned out to be, fun should be treated by some of the critics with such long-faced seriousness'.

Having got this project out of their systems, Jon Lord and Deep Purple reverted to a rather more basic, riff-oriented approach with the album *Deep Purple In Rock* (1970). Lord's Hammond organ was now more often fed through Marshall amplification rather than the more traditional Leslie cabinets, and this gave a much harder, overdriven sound. Examples of this can be found on tracks like 'Bloodsucker' and 'Flight Of The Rat', the latter featuring a particularly violent solo from Lord that showed him at his 'hooligan' best.

Deep Purple went from strength to strength after this album, becoming one of the most successful (and loudest) bands of the Seventies. After a couple of line-up changes, however, they split in 1976, and Lord formed Paice, Ashton and Lord (PAL) with Ian Paice and old friend and drinking partner Tony Ashton. This aggregation lasted for just one album and tour, and 1978 saw Lord joining Whitesnake, the band fronted by ex-Purple vocalist David Coverdale.

Not given to using the large banks of keyboards favoured by some of his contemporaries, the Eighties found Jon using the Memorymoog, a polyphonic synthesiser which he described as 'like having eight or ten Mini-Moogs all linked up together', in addition to his Hammond and piano set-up. With Whitesnake going from strength to strength Jon Lord seemed set to remain both a success and an important influence after over 20 years in the business.

GEOFF WHITEHORN

THE HISTORY OF
Rock